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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/18/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [OVIP](#) [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [SW](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: SWEDISH FOREIGN MINISTER BILDT'S FIVE DAYS IN  
IRAQ, SEPTEMBER 1-5

REF: A. STOCKHOLM 959  
[1](#)B. STOCKHOLM 990

Classified By: Polcouns Casey Christensen, reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

#### Summary and Comment

[1](#)1. (s) Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt will visit Baghdad and Irbil September 1-5. In Baghdad Sept. 1-2, he plans meetings with PM Maliki, President Talibani, FM Zebari, UN rep Ghazi, and is requesting a September 2 breakfast meeting with Ambassador Crocker (see proposed schedule below at para 3). Sweden has requested U.S. assistance with security and transportation with this aspect of the trip. For the September 3-5 visit to Irbil, the Swedes have requested no support and no help with security -- a position we understand may not be warranted by the situation on the ground. The visit to Iraq will not be announced until Bildt is in Iraq. POC in Stockholm is Polcouns Casey Christensen and, for coordination of security and movements, RSO Dan Mahanty, who will follow up in DS channels. Action Request at para 8.

[1](#)2. (s) We believe Swedish FM Carl Bildt's Sept. 1-5 trip to Iraq provides an opportunity to positively influence Europe's perspective on Iraq. Bildt said July 15 in leading daily paper Svenska Dagbladet "When all is said and done, I believe that things would have been worse in Iraq today had Saddam been in power." MFA Director for the Middle East and North Africa Peter Tejler, who is arranging the trip for Bildt, told polcouns August 17 that he hoped the visit to Iraq would help prepare the way for a more coherent EU policy and get Europe more involved in Iraq. We urge strong support for the trip. End Summary and Comment.

#### Bildt's Schedule and Requests

[1](#)3. (s) Bildt will be traveling with a party totaling seven: Bildt, Amb. Treuve (Sweden's Amb. to Iraq resident in Amman), Bildt's press secretary, two political advisers, and two security officers. Bildt's tentative schedule follows:

Aug 31

Depart Stockholm on commercial air to Amman, Jordan.  
Overnight at Grand Hyatt.

Sept. 1: Baghdad

1200 Depart for Amman airport  
1400 Depart via Royal Jordanian for Baghdad  
1630 Arrive Baghdad airport  
-- U.S. ACTION REQUESTED: transport from airport to Office  
of Iraqi Prime Minister

1830 depart Iraqi Prime Minister's office  
-- U.S. ACTION REQUESTED: transport to Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
1900 Meet with Iraqi Foreign Minister  
2000 Dinner with Iraqi Foreign Minister at MFA  
2130 Depart Iraqi MFA  
-- U.S. ACTION REQUESTED: transport to location TBD for overnight stay. Assistance with overnight accommodations (not at U.S. Embassy).

Sept. 2: Baghdad

0800 Breakfast with Ambassador Crocker (proposed)  
-- U.S. ACTION REQUESTED: please confirm  
0900 Depart to Presidential Palace.  
-- U.S. ACTION REQUESTED: transport to Presidential Palace  
0930 Meet with Iraqi President  
1015 Depart meeting with Iraqi President.  
-- U.S. ACTION REQUESTED: transport from Presidential Palace to location TBD for meeting with Iraqi Vice-President.  
1030 Meeting with Iraqi Vice-President.  
1130 Depart meeting with Iraqi Vice-President  
-- U.S. ACTION REQUESTED: transport from TBD location to TBD location  
1200 Lunch with UNSRSG (Ghazi)  
1330 Depart lunch  
-- U.S. ACTION REQUESTED: transport to location TBD  
1400 Press Conference with Iraqi Foreign Minister  
1500 End press conference  
-- U.S. ACTION REQUESTED: transport to airport  
1730 Depart for Amman on Royal Jordanian. RON in Amman.

Sept 3-5: Irbil,  
a Major Source of Immigrants  
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¶4. (s) Bildt plans to travel Sept. 3 from Amman to Irbil, where he and a larger Swedish group than participated in the Baghdad portion of the trip will spend two nights, returning to Amman Sept. 5. The Swedes, based on advice from Amb. Treuve, who has traveled there several times, have determined they do not need help with security in Irbil. Comment: If they are wrong about security conditions in Irbil, we should inform them and offer assistance.

¶5. (c) The visit in the North will include discussions on migration. Sweden is the largest European recipient of immigrants from Iraq. Estimates range from 70,000 (Swedish Migration Board) to 120,000 (Red Cross) Iraqis in Sweden, the majority of whom are Kurds. In 2006, Sweden received 7,000 Iraqi refugees; over half of all Iraqis who ended up in EU countries chose Sweden as their destination. In 2007, Sweden is on track to take in 20,000 Iraqis. These figures will increase in coming years as Sweden's generous family reunification programs add to the intake of Iraqis.

¶6. (s) Tejler told us Sweden will not be endorsing an independent Kurdistan. It will also not see the possibility at this time for forced returns of Iraqis. Tejler said Sweden funds several NGOs working in the Kurdish area. He added that Sweden emphasizes support for and tolerance of minorities.

Sweden's Agenda  
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¶7. (s) Tejler noted that Sweden had earlier called for the creation of the position of EU Special Representative on Iraq. Following on this visit, it may renew that call. Europe, he said, has been split on Iraq, but 2007 is not 2003, and it is time for the EU to focus on and become involved in Iraq. Sweden does not see now the security conditions that would allow reconstruction efforts to be successful. It will instead concentrate on supporting the governmental process, including the establishment of a credible central government, as well as the process of reconciliation and enhancing the role of civil society. Tejler noted that Sweden will not be seeking meetings with U.S. or Iraqi military, and requests that their own security

support during this visit have as little military imprint as possible.

Action Request

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18. (s) Embassy Stockholm recommends both a September 2 breakfast and a pre-trip DVC with Amb. Crocker. Bildt maintains a widely read internet blog, and we can anticipate that he will begin blogging as soon as he reaches Iraq. He is hoping for a briefing and a meeting with Amb. Crocker, which would be most helpful in providing him perspective.  
SILVERMAN